

TRUST IN PEOPLE SCALE

Reference:

1964 Election Study. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, University of Michigan.

Description of Measure:

A 3-item questionnaire designed to measure individuals' general level of trust toward other people. The three items were first used in the 1964 post-election study conducted by the Survey Research Center and have continued to be used in national surveys since. Each of the three items provides a dichotomous choice. One of the two choices is the high trust response, the other is considered the low trust response.

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Hetherington, M. J. (1998). The political relevance of political trust. *The American Political Science Review*, *92*, 791-808.

Scholars have debated the importance of declining political trust to the American political system. By primarily treating trust as a dependent variable, however, scholars have systematically underestimated its relevance. This study establishes the importance of trust by demonstrating that it is simultaneously related to measures of both specific and diffuse support. In fact, trust's effect on feelings about the incumbent president, a measure of specific support, is even stronger than the reverse. This provides a fundamentally different understanding of the importance of declining political trust in recent years. Rather than simply a reflection of dissatisfaction with political leaders, declining trust is a powerful cause of this dissatisfaction. Low trust helps create a political environment in which it is more difficult for leaders to succeed.

Yamagishi, T. (1986). The provisioning of a sanctioning system as a public good. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*, 110-116.

Both the rational-structural approach and the goal/expectation approach to the problem of public goods have theoretical difficulties. The structural approach requires the provision of a sanctioning system to solve the free rider problem. However, a sanctioning system is also a public good because its benefits can be enjoyed by all members regardless of their contribution to its provision. A new problem of the same kind is thereby created in the process of solving the original public good problem. The goal/expectation approach assumes the inducement of other members to mutual cooperation through individuals' cooperative actions, a situation which will be almost impossible in larger groups. To overcome these theoretical difficulties in the existing approaches, a new approach called the structural goal/expectation approach is proposed. According to this new approach, members who have realized the undesirable consequence of free riding and the importance of mutual cooperation will cooperate to establish a sanctioning system which assures other members' cooperation instead of trying to induce other members

into mutual cooperation directly through cooperative actions, One important condition for their voluntary cooperation in the establishment of a sanctioning system is their realization that voluntarily based cooperation is impossible. Predictions derived from the new approach are supported in an experiment using 48 four-person groups.

Levi, M. & Stoker, L. (2000). Political trust and trustworthiness. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3, 475-507.

After addressing the meaning of “trust” and “trustworthiness,” we review survey-based research on citizens' judgments of trust in governments and politicians, and historical and comparative case study research on political trust and government trustworthiness. We first provide an overview of research in these two traditions, and then take up four topics in more detail: (a) political trust and political participation; (b) political trust, public opinion, and the vote; (c) political trust, trustworthy government, and citizen compliance; and (d) political trust, social trust, and cooperation. We conclude with a discussion of fruitful directions for future research.

Scale:

- 1.) Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

(a) Most people can be trusted (b) can't be too careful
- 2.) Would you say that most of the time, people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?

(a) Try to be helpful (b) Look out for themselves.
- 3.) Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair?

(a) Take advantage (b) Try to be fair

Scoring:

The high trust choices are 1a, 2a, and 3b. For each one of these give respondent 1 point. Thus, all respondents will have a score ranging from 0 to 3, with 0 signifying a very low level of trust and 3 signifying a very high level of trust.